



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Our meeting this month will be held on Thursday, November 11th. We will again be at the Arthur and Louise Price Community Room at the Chandler Fashion Center where we have been holding our meetings since June.

Bruce Johnson will present *The Historical Perspective of Windmills*. Bruce was going to give this talk in June but instead talked about *Consultapraneyring*, a discussion of the business fundamentals of consulting. The AICN (Alliance of IEEE Consultants Networks, our national organization) had asked Bruce to prepare that talk for presentation to other Networks across the country. Since the talk was available we grabbed it and postponed *Windmills* until now. Bruce's talks on the history of technology are always interesting and a lot of fun. You learn a lot too. He will talk about an old windmill built in the '30s that generated a megawatt of power and will carry the subject up through the present and into the future.

Ed Koch was going to talk about his log splitter last month. Unfortunately, Ed was tied up dealing with his Chinese manufacturers and was not able to get his presentation ready. Fortunately, Lane Garrett is always ready to talk on short notice on any subject - as long as it has something to do with alternative energy. Lane stepped up and told us about the work he has done to set up solar powered pumps to extract water from the deep bowels of the earth in order to irrigate the desert. Our heartfelt thanks are

due to Lane for giving us such an interesting talk on such short notice.

At last month's Board meeting we decided to set up a Program Committee to organize the programs for our meetings. We hope to continue to have a mix of programs related to the business side of consulting as well as those that are technology oriented. I am told that the committee is looking to bring in some really good outside speakers. Mike Jordan is the committee chairman, and the other members are Eli Kawam and Ed Mischen. If you have any suggestions for speakers or topics, please forward them to Mike, Eli or Ed. I know any and all suggestions will be greatly appreciated.

The annual business meeting and discussion round table will be held as usual at our December meeting. The only business issue of which I am aware is the election of Board members. Each year we elect three members to three years terms. In accordance with the bylaws we have set up a nominating committee. The bylaws state that the committee will consist of the president, vice president and a chairman who must also be a member of the Board (presumably not up for re-election). Ed Mischen is the committee chairman this year. If you are interested in serving on the Board, please contact Ed and let him know. The only eligibility requirements are that you are a member in good standing of the IEEE and PACN. The Nominating Committee can nominate as many people as it deems appropriate, not just one per vacancy. Nominations will also be accepted from the floor

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at the December meeting so you can still make yourself available at the last minute. It is better though to let Ed know in advance. Ed's email address is ed.mischen@philips.com.

The Executive Board meetings precede the regular meeting and start at 5, again in the Price room. PACN members are always welcome, but please keep the conversation turned off so we can conduct the meeting.

See you on the 11th.

Paul

ACTING EDITOR'S MESSAGE

By Vaughn Treude

Once again Clark Jones is "Down Under" (correction: Clark sent an email to tell me he's actually in Italy), so I'm in charge of the newsletter again.

A couple of months ago, I was griping about the economy, among other things. One of our professions' biggest challenges is the prevalence of outsourcing. In that vein, I recently attended a "venture capital round table" at the South Pointe. Somebody in the audience asked the panelists to talk about successful corporate investments they'd been involved in. One of the panel members mentioned a certain Minnesota-based medical device company which he said had outsourced their engineering effort to India. As is normal with outsourcing, they still had a significant technical staff in the US – **but** due to alleged "communications problems" they replaced all their original staff here with Indian

immigrants. Talk about adding injury to insult! You won't find a more fanatical free marketer than me. But it's still irritating to think that we Americans may experience discrimination in our own home country.

I decided to investigate that issue a bit, checking out some immigrant visa forums. I was interested to see an October 18th post from a European here advising a south Asian questioner to "stay clear of the US", that it may currently be the worst place for "an alien with precarious status." He also confirmed my impression that H1B workers tend to be exploited because "if any protest against unfair pay or anything they loose sponsorship of H1B visa so must get back home quickly." (From <http://saloon.javaranch.com>.) As I've noticed before, in politics the "happy medium" is often the worst option. The government should either turn off the visa valve or give those same folks their green cards and let them work anywhere. That would depress our wages somewhat, but deprive the big IT companies of their exploitable labor pool.

Another factor, so I've been led to understand, is the artificial strength of the US dollar. There's a popular conspiracy theory that attributes this as the hidden cause of the Iraq war – that Saddam was going to start selling his oil in Euros, and the US decided to stop him. I don't know about that, but the Euro has risen a lot against the dollar since its inception. According to Gary North, a financial writer whose columns appear in lewrockwell.com, the Chinese have been maintaining an artificially fixed exchange rate of 8.3 yuan to the dollar. This allows us to buy lots of cheap Chinese goods, but it's also seriously overheating their economy. (A few weeks ago I heard a segment on NPR's "Marketplace" that claimed there's actually a shortage of factory workers some places in China.) Eventually the Chinese and Japanese

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are going to start selling their T-bills, and then the dollar will drop in value. (North believes the Chinese want to keep things booming until the Olympics in 2008, but is that possible?) That's good news for us as high-tech workers, especially software developers, since it's an industry with a very low startup cost. But it's bad for us as consumers. I suppose I'd better order some new computer equipment right away, even if I have to extend my already battered credit line. You may soon be going to see old computers being recycled instead of tossed, because we've let all our domestic production capability fly away. And that won't be so easy to

restart here.

A couple more things before I quit kvetching – I'll also be doing the December *Advisor*, so send any submissions to me at vaughn@nakota-software.com. And also, any apologies to anyone who may have received an virus-laden email with my name on it. Gene Baxter recently got one of these, so I'm thinking one of my many machines may have some sort of worm. I'll be running some virus checks as soon as I get this issue to bed.

Vaughn

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**IEEE Phoenix Area Consultants Network
Membership Application Form**

Membership is available to anyone who is interested in the goals of the organization. Full membership entitles a member to voting privileges at business meetings, and to a web site listing. Associate members are not listed and do not vote, but receive all mailings. Note that the newsletter is distributed via e-mail.

I hereby apply for (full____ associate____) membership in the IEEE Phoenix Area Consultants Network.

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